

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Congressman Jim Costa today announced \$10 million in funding for Valley farmers and ranchers to upgrade their tractors and agricultural equipment. The funding, made available through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), offers agricultural producers incentives for retiring old inefficient engines to help improve air quality.

“Today’s announcement is another win for our farmers and Valley economy,” said Costa. “Bringing this funding home will provide our farmers the financial tools to upgrade their farm tractors to meet emissions standards. I am pleased that the USDA recognizes the importance of supporting Valley agriculture as we work to improve our air quality. I also commend the work of our farmers who have been proactive throughout this process. I will continue to work with the Administration to ensure that our farmers and entire Valley receive the resources we need to succeed.”

This funding is in addition to over \$13 million available earlier this year for agricultural air quality improvements through the 2008 Farm Bill’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Costa was critical to securing this funding in the 2008 Farm Bill, and has worked closely with the Administration to make today’s additional \$10 million available.

The release issued by the USDA NRCS in California is below.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **\$10 Million More Available to Help Ag Producers Improve Air Quality**

#### **Funding to Reduce Backlog of Applications for Diesel Engine Replacement**

DAVIS, Calif., June 25, 2010 – The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California announced \$10 million in additional funding for farmers and ranchers interested in reducing air quality emissions from off-road mobile or stationary agricultural sources.

This funding is in addition to over \$13 million available earlier this year for agricultural air quality improvements through the 2008 Farm Bill's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The funding offers agricultural producers incentives for retiring old inefficient engines that contribute to air pollution problems.

“This program has been so successful that we wanted to make more funding available

for the large number of farmers and ranchers still requesting assistance this year,” said Ed Burton, NRCS State Conservationist for California. “We’ll be able to help more producers than we did in 2009.”

The program’s success shows in the numbers: NRCS administered \$18.7 million and funded 335 applications for replacement of on-farm diesel combustion engines in 2009.

There are 36 counties eligible to use the funds to help achieve compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The eligible counties are Alameda, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tulare, Tuolumne, Ventura and Yolo.

“These counties are currently not in compliance with air quality standards for eight-hour ozone and particulate matter,” Burton said. “We’re impressed how farmers and ranchers have stepped up and made an investment in improving California’s air quality.”

Producers have to come up with about half of the funds needed to voluntarily swap out older engines for newer, more efficient ones that are nearly 75 percent cleaner. Stationary, portable and heavy-duty off-road mobile systems are included as part of the program.

NRCS has worked with academic, conservation, regulatory and industry groups to identify agricultural practices that will reduce ozone precursors [oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)] and particulate matter [respirable (PM10) and fine (PM2.5)] emissions from agricultural sources. Applications have been ranked according to the amount of emission reductions achieved in the producer’s proposed plan.

More information can be found at [www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2010/index.html](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2010/index.html). While there currently is an application backlog, interested producers in eligible counties can contact their local NRCS Service Center for information about future opportunities. A list of offices is available at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=CA>.

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